(b) whether it is a fact that at 526 places in the country, the congestion levels were above the permissible limit;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there is a very high percentage of failed connection at the Point of Interconnection (PoI);

(d) what are the reasons for telecom companies unfairly charging customs for 'Drop Calls'; and

(e) the steps proposed to avoid charging customers for failure of telecom companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Network congestion results in failure of calls but established calls are not dropped due to network congestion.

(b) and (c) As per the Point of Interconnections (PoI) congestion report issued by Telcom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), for the period October - December, 2006 the number of PoIs having congestion of more than 0.5% are: October 2006 - 526, November, 2005 - 497 and December 2006 - 389. Out of these, PoIs having congestion more than 40% are 66, 65 and 39 respectively.

(d) and (e) The charging is effected immediately on answering by the called party when call is estabied. All the calls are charged for the usages based on the duration of the calls and pulse rate in the subscribed plan. In the case of dropped calls the customer is charged for usage based on duration of the call and pulse rate in the subscribed plan.

Laws protecting rights of Dalits

1837. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that European Parliament on the Human Rights has passed a resolution to the effect that implementation of laws protecting the right of Dalits remain grossly inadequate, and that atrocities, untouchability, illiteracy, inequality of opportunity continue to blight the lives of Indian Dalits;

(b) whether Government have made any representation to the European body in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The European Parliament adopted a resolution on human rights of Dalits in India on February 1,2007 titled 'European Parliament resolution on the human rights situation of the Dalits in India'.

(b) and (c) Noting that the resolution lacked both balance and perspective, a protest was lodged with the European Parliament.

Nepal's relations with India *Vis-A-Vis* China

†1838. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI VINAY KATIYAR:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the prominent personalities of Nepal has asked for closer relation with China instead of India;

(b) if so, the efforts being considered to have more closer ties with Nepal;

(c) Government's approach towards such statements inspite of efforts so far made; and

(d) whether such elements are also existing in India who are having sympathetic view regarding these statements?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Various opinions with regard to Nepal's relations with China and Idnia are expressed within Nepal. The Government of India remain fully committed to strengthening and deepening its multi-faceted bilateral relationship with the Government and people of Nepal for the mutual benefit and progress of both countries.

Minister's visit to Iran

1839. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during his visit to Iran, its nuclear programme was discussed; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.